

A New Work upon California.

We have just been favored with an opportunity of looking over the proof sheets of a small volume, which, as we understand, is to be published here in a day or two, upon the condition and prospects of this country. It is entitled "California, as it is and as it may be, or a Guide to the Gold Region," and is the production of Dr. F. P. Wierzbicki, some of whose views as previously published, upon the character and structure of the Gold Region, we recently laid before our readers. Dr. Wierzbicki is we believe favorably known in the States as an occasional contributor to some of the scientific Reviews. He has been for some years past a resident of California, and has devoted much time and labor to a thorough exploration of the different portions of the country. The book contains in a condensed and very readable form the result of his enquiries and observations. We have not had time as yet to examine the work thoroughly, but in so far as we have examined it, we have formed a very favorable opinion of its merits and its claims upon the attention of those who are looking to California as the region in which their fortunes are to be buided up or their homes are to be fixed. The work appears to us to contain a great deal of information, well digested, well arranged, and in a very considerable part new, in relation to many topics of high and general interest.

We think that we cannot occupy a portion of our columns more acceptably to our readers, than by presenting to them at considerable length, the author's views upon several important and interesting topics which have attracted our attention in a very cursory perusal of his volume. From the chapter entitled "The Country and its Resources," we extract the following remarks in relation to

Landed Estates in California.

The landed possessions in California may be arranged into three categories, which sprang very naturally from the system of the colonization of the country. There are Mission lands, Pueblo lands and Ranchos, as they are called here, but in better Spanish they would be called *Haciendas*, and in plain English grazing farm lands of private individuals.

The settlement of California was owing to the will of a pious Countess in Mexico, who left an immense fortune to christianize the heathen inhabitants of this country. About the year of 1670, an expedition, led by a missionary priest, and escorted by a company of soldiers and settlers, landed on the shores of California. The first attempts at colonizing the country were not successful, but by perseverance in repeated efforts the Spaniards at last succeeded in getting a foothold in this land. They gathered Indians about them, christianized them after their fashion, and made them *manzanos*; soon, with their labor, Mission buildings were erected, farms put in order, cattle raised, and the Indians were instructed in various handicrafts. Finally, in course of time, through the whole length of the land, Missions were planted, and flourished; the Priests grew fat and rich, and the Indians became tame and industrious, and were well taken care of. The country smiled with abundance, and the people were happy. Soon, settlers came into the country and planted themselves, very naturally, near the Missions, on which, at first, they depended for their worldly goods; but, by degrees, they sprung into Pueblos, viz. towns. These towns, had lands allotted to them by leagues, which were to be used in common by all the inhabitants for their cattle; or if any of them wished to till a piece of land, by an application to the *alcalde*, if there were no objections by the inhabitants, he received a permit from the judge so to do, and as long as he or his heirs occupied it, nobody had a right to disturb them. In this way it followed that the inhabitants of towns acquired small portions of land for their houses and tillage, while the rest of the town land was used in common for grazing. Under this arrangement of town property there was always enough land for all new settlers that might come to inhabit these Pueblos. This manner of disposing of town land, sanctioned by Mexican law, served as a precedent to the town authorities of San Francisco, Pueblo de San Jose, Santa Cruz and Monterey, when they, in 1847, disposed of a portion of the land belonging to these respective towns, giving perpetual leases to their possessors. This measure was particularly favorable to foreigners recently arrived in the country, as thus they were enabled to buy the rights of the natives, who were not disposed to put much value upon so small parcels of land, and thereby the American interest was much promoted.

The land of the *ranchos* was always either a royal grant of Spain or of the supreme government of Mexico, or latterly of the Governor of California; all these grants practically had the same effect; the possessor of the tract of land thus granted was always in the full enjoyment of his rights and privileges, and no authority could disturb him in his possessions. As the country was frequently disturbed by revolutions, when it was not uncommon for one of the contending parties to burn up, or carry away, or destroy, the archives of a town or even of the country, the land proprietors were not molested in their possessions, although they could not show their property unregistered in the records. Besides, the officers of the Mexican government, being proverbially negligent of

their duty, may not have paid sufficient attention to proper order in these matters. Under such circumstances it would not be surprising if some proprietors should find their property unregistered in the archives of the country. Whatever land is left that has not been disposed of in one of the ways aforesaid, is public land, at the disposal of the government.

Such being the disposition of landed property in California, the American government, if it be just and does not wish to create a general dissatisfaction among the people towards itself, must recognise the actual possessors in their possessions by a summary act of legislation recognising the rights they claim, and to prevent all future difficulties, giving them the fee-simple titles to their possessions. The *ranchos* must be acknowledged to be the property of private individuals; the towns must have their rights to their town lands, and the Missions, if they yet have any Indians, ought to retain their tracts of land; or if these are no longer, the church and public education have the next and best right to them.

In view of the state of landed property of the country, there are three methods by the means of which California may receive an increase to its population without any violence to justice or law being committed. Supposing that the American government has recognised all titles to lands as it found them, then those who have no means of buying land from private individuals should receive liberal donations from the government, or settle in one of the towns where yet town lands exist, and taking advantage of the Mexican law by petitioning the *alcalde*, the settler could get land for his house and tillage, and being more industrious than the natives, he could even grow rich soon and enjoy his possessions as if they were his in fee simple. Those who have means could find tracts of land to buy, either enough for themselves, or larger than they actually need, to be divided into farms of sufficient size and induce new settlers, by offering them liberal terms, to settle around them; by this arrangement both parties would be gainers.

In our view of the subject, we think the interest of the whole country would induce the government to use all means at its disposal to favor a prompt settlement of California, since the sooner it will be densely settled the sooner its vast resources will be developed, and the sooner the whole Union will reap advantages resulting from such a development.

We quote the above view as to the legislation required from the Federal Government in regard to Landed Titles here, not as expressing any opinion of our own at this time in relation to so important and complicated a matter, but as being the view of an observer who seems to have devoted much attention to the subject, and who appears to write in a disinterested spirit.

In the same chapter, the author, before giving his views of the Gold Region, makes the following statement in regard to the

Various Mineral Resources of the Country.

When considered in point of mineral productions, if allowed to be developed by capitalists, California is capable of becoming an important centre of the commerce of the Pacific. Here we find, in the neighborhood of Clear Lake, about a hundred and twenty-five miles north of Sonoma, Lead, Copper, Sulphur and Saltpetre; on the south side of San Francisco Bay, Silver Mines have been found in the vicinity of Pueblo de San Jose; Quicksilver mines, which are pronounced to be richer than those of Spain, are already being worked to a great profit in the same region.

Coal strata have been also found in the coast range of mountains near Santa Cruz, in the neighborhood of the Mission, San Luis Obispo, and near San Diego. California coal seems to be in the intermediate state, between the anthracite and the bituminous; it is not as hard as the former nor so soft as the latter; it burns more easily than the first, and does not give out so smoky and unpleasant a flame as the second; it ignites easily and burns with a very pleasant flame without much smoke. Iron is scattered through the mountains of the country, and we have no doubt that a workable mine of it will before long be discovered. We mention not the gold washings that are being worked so successfully at present, for as respects their duration and the development of the industry of the country, they scarcely deserve the attention of the economist; they ever so rich, as all other mines are more beneficent in their influence to the progress of a country than gold mines. These will become the means of advancing the prosperity of the country only when a regular system of mining by sinking shafts into the rocks shall commence, which it is to be hoped will be done ere long.

The following extract gives the author's views as to

The Agriculture of California.

The labor expended in working these various mines would give a firm support to the agriculture of the country, which at this day is totally neglected. There is no country, probably, where the soil is so grateful to the hand that cultivates it. There is almost no plant, grain or fruit that cannot be raised here. Rye grows wild on the skirts of the gold region towards the Sierra Nevada; oats cover completely the coast range of the mountains; wheat and corn grow luxuriantly on all the plains, notwithstanding it rains only in the winter season; potatoes, onions and every kind of garden vegetables with very little care grow to a very large size and of excellent flavor. Some of these vegetables can be kept growing all the year round, such as onions, peas, and some others. Every description of fruit trees seem to be natural to the soil, for they attain here a great perfection. The apple, the peach, the

pear, the apricot, the fig, the cherry, the plum, the grape, the pomegranate, the citron, the orange, the olive, the currant, the gooseberry and various other berries are found here either cultivated or in a wild state. The inhabitants of the country have not done much towards the culture of any fruit trees or shrubs; and that is the reason the quantity of any fruit is very limited, when compared with the wants of the population and the capacities of the soil. Knowledge and industry with very little exertion would increase the quantity not only to supply the wants of the country but even to a super-abundance. The pear and the olive seem to have been the favorite fruit with the Priests of the Missions, as they have raised them in large quantities and of excellent quality. The California olive is among the largest known, and in flavor surpasses that of France; the varieties of the pear are numerous and delicious in quality. The grapevine grows throughout the country, from the extreme north down to San Diego. Excellent grape is produced at Sonoma, at the Mission of San Jose, and some other points. The best however, or where it was made the best use of, is that of the Pueblo de los Angeles. The wine produced there by several vine growers is of excellent quality; in the opinion of many judges in the matter, it is superior to any wine that Spain or Portugal can produce. Its color, its flavor, and its strength are *sui generis*; it wants only to be known to be sought after by amateurs, and there is no doubt but its culture and the exportation of it will extend rapidly with the increase of commerce on this coast. The most celebrated wine at present is that made by M. Vignes, a French gentleman who settled in the country some fifteen years ago and was the first to plant a vineyard in this region. There are two qualities of it, red and white; the latter is more inviting than the former by the very beauty of its color. The growing of the grapevine and of the olive may be made a very profitable branch of foreign commerce, if there were men to attend to the business; settlers from the south of Europe could develop this branch of industry to great advantage, and could not fail to make themselves opulent. There are in the country appropriate spots for the culture of rice and the sugar cane; the former could be easily raised on the overflowed lands of the San Joaquin and on the creeks of San Francisco Bay. Cotton even, might be raised here, but we think one could employ his time more profitably in some other business, as cotton is so cheap elsewhere. Hemp grows wild in different parts of the country.

There is yet another branch of industry at which we have not hitherto so much as hinted, but which would prove for California one of the richest mines of which she could boast; we mean the raising of sheep. The climate of the country and much of its surface are admirably adapted for the purpose; in fact, as it proved a source of wealth to New South Wales, it would be equally so to California; a great similarity of climate of the two countries guarantees the result. In this way every portion of the country would be turned to advantage; the mountains now lying barren would be a grazing ground for the sheep; and the valleys now trodden exclusively by cattle and horses would be given up to the plough, and there would be no more live stock raised than the actual wants of the country require. Merino rams could be easily procured from Oregon, Peru, or even New South Wales, to improve the native breed of the sheep. He who enters upon this business the first will lay the foundation for a colossal fortune, which he can realize in a few years.

The above extracts will enable our readers to judge for themselves of the style and general character of this forthcoming volume. There are, however, several other very interesting chapters, of which our limits do not allow now to give a specimen. Among them we notice one entitled "The Towns of California and what relates to them"; another headed "Advice to the Miner," and a third under the general title of "The Gold Region." On the whole, we think the work will prove to be an instructive and useful one. It deserves a favorable reception from Californians, in view of the enterprise and energy which, in the face of much expense and difficulty, have brought it out among us, and we think it will merit and repay an extensive circulation.